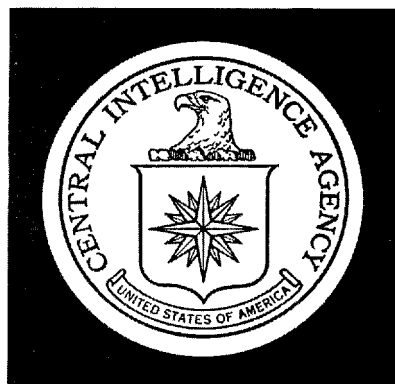


Secret



DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

NIGERIA: COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AND AID

Secret

23

8 December 1967
No. 1681/67

WARNING

This document contains information affecting the national defense of the United States, within the meaning of Title 18, sections 793 and 794, of the US Code, as amended. Its transmission or revelation of its contents to or receipt by an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

GROUP 1 EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC DOWNGRADING AND DECLASSIFICATION

~~SECRET~~

25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
8 December 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Nigeria: Communist Influence and Aid

Summary

Nigerians are being increasingly exposed to large amounts of Soviet propaganda, as well as more tangible blandishments, as Moscow moves to capitalize on its growing acceptance in Africa's most populous country. The USSR has followed up last summer's military and cultural agreements with offers of economic aid and is trying hard to portray itself as Nigeria's friend in need.

This latest Soviet venture into the frustrating world of black Africa has already produced some solid benefits for the USSR. At this stage, however, key Nigerian leaders are still wary of becoming involved with the Soviets. In all, although the Soviets will make some gains and Nigeria is likely to adopt more of an independent policy in foreign affairs, Western influence probably will not be seriously undercut, at least over the short term.

25X1

25X1

SECRET

25X1

Communist Military and Economic Assistance

1. Moscow has had correct but not especially warm relations with Nigeria since 1961. Only this year when the Soviets managed to sell over \$5 million worth of military equipment to the Federal Military Government (FMG) have they had any notable success in Lagos. In trying to widen this opening, the Soviets are using all their standard tactics. The effort has thus far been comprehensive, although relatively inexpensive.

2. The USSR has provided since mid-August ten MIG jets and at most three patrol boats. Some 40-60 Soviet technicians are currently in Nigeria to train Nigerians to use the equipment and to maintain the aircraft.

3. In a follow-up to its military deliveries, Moscow recently renewed an offer of up to \$56 million in economic credits to Lagos to help in reconstruction and rehabilitation in the aftermath of the civil war, particularly the rebuilding of roads and bridges damaged during the fighting. The Soviets have also increased the number of scholarships available for training Nigerians in the USSR. Over the years nearly 500 Nigerians have already received such Soviet training.

4. Other Communist countries have also offered aid and provided technicians. Poland several years ago offered a \$28-million development loan, and Czechoslovakia offered a \$14-million line of credit in 1965.

Diplomatic Relations

5. Moscow recently requested permission from the FMG to augment the staff at its embassy in Lagos by 24, most of whom would be nondiplomatic personnel. The Ministry of External Affairs believes that in view of the present cordial relations between the

25X1

SECRET

25X1

two countries it cannot reject what it considers a rather sizable increase and has passed the request on to the Supreme Military Council. The Soviets just opened with some fanfare a handsome chancery in Lagos that is obviously too large for the eight or so diplomatic personnel now stationed in Lagos, indicating that they expect growing contacts to warrant increased representation.

Soviet Tactics

6. Since the arms deal was concluded, the Soviets have been expanding their use of standard tactics for winning friends and influence. A number of Soviet-Nigerian friendship societies have recently been formed, particularly in Ibadan, capital of the Western state, the homeland of the Yoruba tribe. The Yorubas, along with the Ibo tribe, have furnished a large proportion of the educated elite in Nigeria. Now that Ibo competition for high government office has declined drastically, the Yorubas are probably considered a prime target for Soviet propaganda. Soviet-Nigerian cultural and friendship societies are also being formed in the largely Muslim north, where the Soviets can take advantage of their close relationship with the Arab Muslim world. Northern Nigeria itself is experiencing social and political changes. The younger, more radical minority tribesmen are challenging the older, conservative Hausa-Fulani for political power, a situation the Communists might find relatively easy to exploit.

7. Moscow is also trying to enlarge its toe hold in the Nigerian labor movement

25X1

25X1

SECRET

25X1

25X1

8. Soviet efforts are also being directed at journalists and information media in general. The Soviet news agency, Novosti, has just appointed a representative in Ibadan, and

25X1

there has been a considerable increase in all news media of material sympathetic to the Communists, partly because FMG import restrictions have been relaxed. Increased amounts of Soviet literature can be bought at newstands and book stores, and are distributed by the NTUC and affiliated unions. A new Communist-supported magazine, New World, was launched on 28 October with a Nigerian editor who was snatched from obscurity in 1966 to receive the Lenin Peace Prize.

9. Moscow has resorted largely to open channels to win friends, and has played down its support of the nascent Communist party in Nigeria--the Socialist Workers' and Farmers' Party (SWAFP). SWAFP reportedly has been told that requests for travel and study in Communist countries should now be made through the Federal Ministry of Labor. This policy serves to reduce the possibility of friction with the FMG, which has banned all political parties.

Nigeria's Attitude toward the US

10. Moscow's improved receptivity in Nigeria was preceded and accompanied by a rise in anti-US sentiment in much of the country outside the former Eastern region. Despite vigorous denials, many Nigerians believe the US has actively aided Biafra. The FMG has frequently permitted the printing and broadcasting of vitriolic condemnations of the US, including so-called exposés of CIA operations in Africa. Nigerians construe the US refusal to permit

25X1

SECRET

Approved For Release 2005/06/13 : CIA-RDP79T00826A003000300001-9

25X1

arms sales to the FMG as disapproval of the federal effort against the secessionist Biafra regime. One result of the anti-Americanism has been a decrease in contacts between Americans and Nigerians at both official and private levels. There are also signs that at least some government officials are not eager for US Peace Corps personnel to continue to serve in Nigeria. The Federal Executive Council, after representations by the US Embassy, now has the question of Peace Corps continuance under advisement.

11. Once the decision was taken to support the FMG, the Soviet propaganda apparatus quickly played on Nigerian suspicions of the US--for example, by linking US oil interests with Biafra, which before the civil war produced most of Nigeria's oil. Moscow also claimed that the US was recruiting mercenaries for Biafra. The Soviet Embassy, meanwhile, has provided funds and material to the government-owned daily newspaper that has printed violent anti-US articles.

Nigerian Suspicions of the Communist World

12. The USSR has clearly made something of a breakthrough in its relations with a country long within the Western sphere. In the future, more contacts and ties on various levels between Nigeria and the USSR and other Communist countries can be expected. Nevertheless, there are still important influences working in Nigeria against Soviet aims. General Gowon, head of the FMG, seems strongly committed to maintaining Nigeria's traditional close ties with the West, particularly Great Britain, and has consistently treated the Soviet arms deal as a commercial transaction only. Indeed, Lagos in early December decided, with British approval, to rely on UK sources for most of its military needs. Both the federal minister of external affairs, Dr. Arikpo, and his top civil servant in the ministry appear firmly oriented to the West and well aware of the dangers of too serious a flirtation with the Communist world.

Approved For Release 2005/06/13 : CIA-RDP79T00826A003000300001-9

25X1

SECRET

25X1

Prospects

13. The West, while losing its basic monopoly in Nigeria and now facing a measure of residual resentment over its posture regarding the civil war, will probably still be looked to for the major aid necessary for reconstruction and rehabilitation. In Nigerian eyes, the amount of aid forthcoming from Western sources may well play an important part in any decisions regarding the Soviet aid offer. Because of Nigeria's good long-term economic prospects, a return to peace and stability is likely to bring forth substantial amounts of Western investment capital, particularly in the as yet partially exploited oil industry.

14. On the whole, Nigeria is likely to be somewhat less amenable to Western influence than in the past and will be a more dubious vehicle of moderation in African affairs. Some of the more influential government officials have already indicated Nigeria will assume a much more nonaligned stance, a policy likely to affect the Nigerian position on some of the major international issues.

15. The degree of the Nigerian shift away from Western influences will, however, be dependent on the outcome of post - civil war competition for power within Nigeria. The Communist and radical fringe is hardly a direct contender, but most of the important civilian aspirants, and some military as well, are fully capable of playing a very opportunistic game.

25X1

25X1

SECRET

Approved For Release 2005/06/13 : CIA-RDP79T00826A003000300001-9

25X1

25X1

[redacted] spread of anti-US sentiment in the northern states, a task in which he has had the help of the younger, radical elements who are rising to the fore in the north.

Approved For Release 2005/06/13 : CIA-RDP79T00826A003000300001-9

25X1

Secret Approved For Release 2005/06/13 : CIA-RDP79T00826A003000300001-9

Secret

Approved For Release 2005/06/13 : CIA-RDP79T00826A003000300001-9

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/06/13 : CIA-RDP79T00826A003000300001-9

Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2005/06/13 : CIA-RDP79T00826A003000300001-9

S E C R E T

25X1

8 December 1967

TALKING PAPER for "Nigeria: Communist Influence and Aid"

1. This memo was self-initiated to record the dimensions of the increasing Soviet presence in Nigeria and to assess the present and likely future impact of Soviet initiatives on US-Nigerian relations.

2. Moscow's thrust involves offers of economic aid, following the sale and delivery of military equipment during the past summer and fall. The Soviets have also greatly increased their contacts at local levels, paying particular attention to key labor unions. Large infusions of Soviet propaganda are also abetting rising anti-Americanism

25X1

Nigeria's basic Western orientation is not likely to change very much, although it will almost certainly pursue a more independent course in international affairs.

3. Routine internal and external distribution is recommended.

S E C R E T

25X1